United Nations A/49/PV.58

General Assembly
Forty-ninth Session

Official Records

58th Meeting
Thursday, 17 November 1994, 10:00 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Essy ..... (Coté d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 23

International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters

(a) Report of the Secretary-General (A/49/487)

(b) Draft resolution (A/49/L.25/Rev.1)

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I call on the representative of Nicaragua to introduce draft resolution A/49/L.25/Rev.1.

Mr. Vilchez Asher (Nicaragua) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like at the outset to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for the support given to the economic and social reconstruction of Nicaragua and for the publication of his report (A/49/487).

Nicaragua was pleased when the General Assembly on 22 October 1993 adopted resolution 48/8, in which the Assembly, concerned at the fact that the recent natural disasters and the burden of foreign debt were impeding Nicaragua's efforts to overcome the consequences of the war within the framework of a democracy and in the macroeconomic conditions already achieved, requested the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the relevant organs and organizations of the United Nations system, to provide Nicaragua with all necessary assistance for its rehabilitation, reconstruction, stabilization and development, in order to render the peace and democracy achieved irreversible. In this context, we greatly appreciate the contributions of organizations and agencies of the United Nations system in various fields, as well as the initiatives supported by the international community.

The Government of the Republic of Nicaragua, with the assistance of democratic political forces, the support of our people and the solidarity of the international community, continues to make considerable efforts to overcome our main challenges: the consequences of the war, poverty and the natural disasters that have beset us.

Nicaragua faces major challenges. We have undergone a total transformation, so complex that it deserves special treatment. Our country is in the process of transition from totalitarianism to a participatory democracy, from a centralized economy to a market economy, from poverty to development, from war to peace and from confrontation to political and economic reintegration. Our Government has been promoting the process in a polarized society suffering from natural disasters that have worsened the country's already precarious economic and social situation.

The Government of Nicaragua, headed by Mrs. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, is involved in a broad reform process designed to achieve national reconciliation, pacification and economic and social development. Despite the difficulty of this process, we have been engaged in consultation, dialogue and joint

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action with various national political groups. There is no doubt that since 1990 Nicaragua has achieved a great deal in a number of these areas. Nevertheless, there have been substantial lags in other important sectors.

Considerable progress has been made in the pacification of the country, democratic practices have improved and today Nicaragua enjoys a greater degree of political freedom than in its entire history. In the economic sphere it has established a framework for a market economy, has achieved macroeconomic stabilization and has curbed hyperinflation.

The report submitted by the Secretary-General, without being exhaustive, highlights the considerable progress made in the political and economic fields as well as the fact that in some areas, mainly the social area, progress has lagged.

However, as the report indicates, despite the successes in the transition process, the country has not made as much progress as it would have liked in all areas. There is a considerable lag in the socio-economic field compared with the political and macroeconomic areas, which could cause considerable social friction. Therefore we need urgent action to achieve harmony. Here international cooperation must be adapted to the specific national situation by contributing to the formulation and implementation of measures designed to improve the standard of living of the majority of the population.

The close harmony that must exist between the process of political reconciliation and economic and social recovery is fundamental in order to consolidate the progress made in Nicaragua to date. This requires the sustained support of the international community.

In this context, we are grateful for the creation, with the support of the Secretary-General and on the basis of resolution 48/161 of 20 December 1993, of an active group of friendly countries composed of Canada, Mexico, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden. This Support Group is playing an extremely important role in helping to reactivate the economic and social development of our country, which will undoubtedly lead to the strengthening of our democracy and institutions.

Despite the achievements of the past three years, attaining Nicaragua's social and macroeconomic objectives for the period 1994-1997 depends on considerable external financing in the medium term. Even under certain optimistic scenarios, involving great fiscal discipline, important structural reforms and no delays in disbursements by international financial institutions, our country's international viability hinges to a large extent on finance obtained from a combination of external transfers and considerable reductions of Nicaragua's foreign debt, which at 31 December 1992 amounted to $11.126 billion, or $2,928 for each Nicaraguan.

Much of the progress in and the very future of consolidating our democracy hinges on urgently tackling this problem, which has placed Nicaragua in a much worse situation than that of any other country classified by the World Bank as a severely indebted low-income country. In 1992 the foreign debt was approximately 3,466 per cent of exports and 822 per cent of gross domestic product, while the amount needed for debt servicing was 344 per cent of exports or 23 times more than the average for the severely indebted low-income countries.

This disproportionate debt in a country that, because of conflict, has reduced levels of exports to approximately $300 million a year, makes Nicaragua an exceptional case requiring massive reductions in its foreign debt to ensure its medium-term viability. The international community's recognition of Nicaragua's exceptional situation is a key element in its growth and development prospects. Nicaragua appreciates this special status.

The Government of Mrs. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro continues to make great efforts to carry out an ambitious programme of economic and social reform. The main object of Nicaragua's economic programme for 1994-1997 is to consolidate the achievements of the years 1991-1993, to intensify the process of structural reforms required for the effective functioning of a competitive economy and to make progress towards viability in the international economy.

In the social sphere, the main social indicators of our country show that in 1994 50 per cent of the population lived in poverty, infant mortality was 72 per 1,000, and 28 per cent of children were undernourished. The Government therefore attaches the highest priority to strengthening a combination of institutional changes and to developing various social programmes. Foremost among them are projects to alleviate poverty in the short term.

The principal macroeconomic objectives of the programme are to create the foundations of sustained growth in real per capita income, to reduce inflation to single digits and to strengthen the reserves of the Central Bank. The Government programme also emphasizes development of the right climate for private investment and the expansion of employment in productive activities, thus improving the living conditions of the poorest sectors of the population.

Nicaragua is making important strides in structural adjustment and stabilization in a framework of political and economic democracy. However, 1994 and 1995 will be key years for Nicaragua, since we will be consolidating the foundations for a process of sustainable growth and recovery of national production and consumption. The recent signing of multilateral agreements shows the international community's firm support for the economic programme we have been implementing. That support will provide the funds to bring our balance of payments into equilibrium and carry out important economic and social projects.

Nicaragua will continue to implement suitable economic and social policies and to make the adjustments necessary to counteract the unfavourable impact of factors that have harmed the economy this year, such as the severe drought, which reduced the country's agricultural output, and electricity shortages that have affected the growth of economic activity this year. According to statistics released by the Ministry of Agriculture, productive areas lost through drought total some 256,853 *manzanas* of arable land, a loss that directly affects 135,104 producing families and has an indirect effect on 130,000 agricultural labourers who have lost their jobs owing to lack of work. If we take into account the fact that every family affected numbers at least five members, we see that the total number of persons affected is an estimated 675,520, or more than 25 per cent of the Nicaraguan population.

The Government of Mrs. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro will continue to make every effort necessary to promote greater respect for human rights, consolidate peace, establish a state of law and achieve progress towards stability. There will be improvements in the financial system, priority being given to public expenditure in those areas with the greatest social and economic impact, to the privatization and deregulation of publicly owned entities and to important advances in the process of reform and diminishing the role of the State. Similarly, the country will continue to improve methods of promoting confidence in the private sector so that investments there will help create more jobs and enable us to expand our production base. This process is being helped by the gradual progress being achieved in the settlement of ownership disputes and a greater strengthening of the climate of peace and security in the countryside.

However, the accumulated effect of natural disasters, the aftermath of the war and the resulting economic and social problems represents a tremendous obstacle to any real progress in development. Our experience demonstrates that peace-building in the aftermath of conflicts must be accompanied by global development efforts in the political, economic and social spheres and that the resources mobilized should be channelled to those efforts.

Nicaragua is grateful for the generous and effective response of the United Nations and the international community in mobilizing assistance to it. Such efforts will help to strengthen the direct link between democracy, peace and development.

My delegation, on behalf of all the sponsors, has the honour to introduce the draft resolution (A/49/L.25/Rev.1), "International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters".

This draft resolution refers to an earlier resolution on the same subject and updates it, taking into account new elements that have emerged in Nicaragua. In this connection, we have included two new preambular paragraphs, one taking into account the central role of the Nicaraguan people and Government in seeking lasting solutions to consolidate the achievements of their transition and the other taking into account the commitments adopted by the Central American Presidents at the Central American Environment Summit for Sustainable Development, in which it was decided to give special attention to Nicaragua due to its exceptional situation.

The operative portion of the draft resolution is similar to that of General Assembly resolution 48/8, with a few additions and changes. The unanimous adoption of the draft resolution will be further demonstration of the political will of the international community to support Nicaragua's national reconciliation, peace-building, democracy and economic and social development, and will have a positive effect in consolidating a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development in Central

America. We therefore hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Flores Olea (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): We should like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/49/487) entitled "International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters", in which he gives an account of the support activities carried out by bodies of the United Nations system, especially the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), on behalf of Nicaragua.

In recent years we have witnessed the efforts made by Central American countries to overcome a period marked by violence, instability and shortage. Such efforts have called for goodwill from all sectors of society in those countries and the continued support of the international community.

In Central America there continue to be obstacles to consolidating the bases of stable economic and social development. In this connection, the international community must play a meaningful role in expanding and enhancing support for that region.

For Mexico, Central America is an area of priority interest because of our geographical proximity and our close historical and cultural links with that region. In this connection, my country has consistently engaged in cooperation activities designed to lend support to the recovery and economic and social development of the five countries of the region.

Today Nicaragua is facing major challenges in the economic, political and social sectors. It is therefore making tremendous efforts to reactivate those sectors. To the problems stemming from a prolonged period of armed conflict have been added others that are the result of various natural disasters, which have led to a further deterioration of the country's economic and social situation.

We should like to express our gratitude to the Government of Nicaragua for its efforts in the economic sphere to bring about macroeconomic stabilization and lay down firm bases for sustainable development. We must also emphasize the considerable progress made in the sphere of public finance, which has helped to bring about a drastic reduction in inflation from the levels of the last decade.

Nevertheless, the Secretary-General points out in his report that economic activity as a whole has not been sufficiently reactivated. The country has not been able to expand its participation in international markets to any significant extent, and its exports continue to lag behind imports; the balance of payments deficit is between $600 million and $700 million per year.

In the social sphere, as the report states, the situation gives grounds for concern. According to the Secretary-General's report, current per capita gross national product is at the level of least developed countries. Unemployment stands at 22.6 per cent; and underemployment at 20 per cent; 75 per cent of Nicaraguan families live below the poverty level, with 44 per cent in extreme poverty.

The report goes on to note that, in spite of the achievements in Nicaragua, the country has not been able to advance in all areas and that there is a lag in the socio-economic field in relation to the political and macroeconomic areas. Finally, the Secretary-General emphasizes the importance of international cooperation, which must be adapted to the national situation, and which requires special attention to the productive sector. This would have a positive, multiplier effect on the Nicaraguan economy.

Within its means, Mexico has provided and intends to continue providing support for Nicaragua. In the context of resolution 48/161, Mexico is participating in the Group of Friends set up by the Secretary-General to support the revitalization of economic and social development in Nicaragua. My country has instituted a number of support mechanisms involving both development projects and technical assistance activities. Thy include: the first agreement on financial cooperation between Mexico and the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI); the addendum to the second agreement on financial cooperation between Mexico and the CABEI; the Programme for the Financing of Central American Imports, which was intended to make $65 million in assistance available to Central American countries as from 1988; the Mexico-CABEI programme for professional development; and the Technical Cooperation Programme with Central America. Under the professional development programme, 92 Nicaraguans have been trained in Mexican public institutions since 1988.

We must recognize that the efforts of the people and the Government of Nicaragua will be more effective if

the international community and the competent international organizations cooperate with it to consolidate its own economic, social and institutional objectives. Hence, we urge the international community and financial bodies such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Inter-American Development Bank to grant Nicaragua the favourable treatment its exceptional circumstances require.

We call on Member States to make an additional contribution to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Nicaragua through the adoption by consensus of the draft resolution before the Assembly.

Organization of work

The President (*interpretation from French*): I should like to inform the Assembly that the Permanent Representative of Denmark, on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States, in a letter dated 15 November 1994, requests that the General Assembly hear in plenary meeting a statement by the observer of the Holy See during the debate on agenda item 158, "Report of the International Conference on Population and Development", scheduled for today.

In another letter of the same date, the Permanent Representative of Denmark, also on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States, requests that the Assembly hear in plenary meeting a statement by the observer of Switzerland during the debate on item 37, "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance", scheduled for Wednesday, 23 November, as well as during the debate on item 92, "Agenda for development", scheduled for Monday, 21 November.

Members will recall that, in accordance with established practice of the General Assembly, observer non-Member States may normally make statements only in the Main Committees. However, following consultations, and taking into account the importance attached to the issues under discussion, it is proposed that the General Assembly should take a decision on those requests.

May I take it that there is no objection to the proposal to hear the observer of the Holy See in the course of the debate on agenda item 158?

It was so decided.

The President (*interpretation from French*): Next, may I take it that there is no objection to the proposal to hear the observer of Switzerland during the course of the debate on agenda item 37 and on agenda item 92?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 23 (*continued*)

International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters

(a) Report of the Secretary-General (A/49/487)

(b) Draft resolution (A/49/L.25/Rev.1)

Mr. Maruyama (Japan) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation appreciates the efforts the Government of Nicaragua, led by President Chamorro, has been making to lay a durable foundation for democracy, market-oriented economic reform and reconstruction of the economy since the April 1990 peaceful transfer of power and the demobilization of the armed opposition.

We have been pleased by the improvements that have taken place in the political area, especially those which have strengthened democracy, the rule of law, the protection of human rights and security. Economic reform has likewise been making progress, and in this connection my Government welcomes the announcement by the Government of Nicaragua that it intends to continue implementing the structural adjustment programme it undertook on the recommendation of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

To support the Government of Nicaragua as it labours to further democracy and economic reform, donor countries and the international community must continue to provide the financial resources and technical assistance that the country needs and deserves.

For its part, Japan has given highest priority to support for efforts in those two areas in its programme of cooperation in Latin America and particularly in Central America. It has therefore endorsed the efforts of the Government of Nicaragua in both the political and economic spheres, and has provided it with a steady flow of support on the basis of its Official Development Assistance Charter. For example, my Government

recently decided to lend the Government of Nicaragua $37.5 million for its Economic Reconstruction Programme II, and to provide it with extensive assistance to help it increase food production, rehabilitate its socio-economic infrastructure and improve its drinking-water supply system. Also, in the near future, my Government plans to send a high-level mission to Nicaragua to engage in a dialogue on Japan's medium- and long-term policy on economic cooperation with Nicaragua.

In closing, my delegation wishes once again to express its appreciation for the efforts the Government of Nicaragua is making to promote reconciliation, improve security, protect human rights and achieve an early solution to property disputes, and it urges the Government of Nicaragua to continue these efforts.

As one of the sponsors of the draft resolution, Japan hopes that, with international support, the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua will progress as rapidly as possible, and it is determined to play a significant role in that process.

Mr. Escobar (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is an honour for Colombia to support, under agenda item 23, the draft resolution entitled "International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters". The exceptional circumstances experienced by that country make it necessary to lend continuing support to its rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts.

Colombia has taken an active part in the Central American peace process, beginning with the Contadora Group and subsequently in the Rio Group. That Group's work was instrumental in arriving at the Esquipulas I and II agreements, which made possible the political viability of peace in the region and succeeded in ending the armed confrontation.

The time has now come for reconstruction in the interests of peace. As part of this new process, the Government of Colombia has given the Government of Nicaragua favourable terms for the payment of its debt to Colombia and has also promoted the greatest possible flexible support on the part of regional organizations.

The Government of Nicaragua, in the context of its internal legal and constitutional framework, has offered, to the extent possible, a gradual solution to the serious ownership problem and to strengthening the judiciary, as well as to the other goals designed to establish a genuine rule of law to provide security and legal guarantees for its citizens. These actions are in conformity with the content of the draft resolution before us, especially the request for the Secretary-General,

> "in cooperation with the relevant organs and organizations of the United Nations system and in close cooperation with the Nicaraguan authorities, to continue to provide all necessary assistance to activities for the reconstruction, stabilization and development of that country and to continue to ensure the timely, comprehensive, flexible and effective formulation and coordination of programmes of the United Nations system in Nicaragua, given the importance of these activities for the consolidation of peace". *(A/49/L.25/Rev.1, para. 5)*

Colombia's cooperation with Nicaragua is inspired by the affection we have for that sister country, by our respect for the Charter of the United Nations and by international agreements. It is enshrined in our 1991 constitution, in whose preamble the people of Colombia commit themselves to promoting the integration of the Latin American community and whose Article 9 states that

> "Colombia's foreign policy is aimed at achieving Latin American and Caribbean integration".

Now, in the wake of the bloody struggle it endured for so many years, Nicaragua comes before the international community, the American continent and the world with the resolve to achieve the goal of a true, participatory democracy with full respect for the principles and norms of international law.

Mr. Sersale di Cerisano (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua by the United Nations system is, in Argentina's opinion, a case which requires thorough consideration and one from which much can be learned with respect to the entire international system of cooperation for development.

What are the key elements? First, the situation combines two issues that deserve priority attention from the system in terms of reconstruction: the post-conflict era and natural disasters.

Secondly, the process of rehabilitation and reconstruction for development is taking place within a

democratic context and with the participation of all sectors of the population. The United Nations contribution must take the form of technical, economic and financial cooperation activities, aimed at the economic consolidation of a democratic regime, which would complement the efforts of the Nicaraguan Government.

Thirdly, from the standpoint of an operational strategy for the activities of the United Nations system, the priority tasks are consistent with the action guidelines included in the concept of sustainable human development.

And, finally, national reconstruction is taking place as part of the process of achieving peace in an entire region that for various reasons has been plagued by natural and man-made disasters. Therefore, any improvement in the situation in Nicaragua will have a positive impact on Central America as a whole, an area that since the 1980s has been given priority attention by the international community.

All these combined elements lead us to the following preliminary conclusion: the current situation in Nicaragua represents a model to which the United Nations system should pay particular attention because of the comparative advantages involved in lending assistance in cases such as this one.

Argentina is in favour of the United Nations paying particular attention in political terms and prioritizing the use of resources with respect to cases such as that of Nicaragua. This will help generate, on the multilateral and bilateral levels, a predictable and reliable flow of technical, economic and financial assistance, which will enable the Government of Nicaragua plan, in the medium term, its economic reconstruction and thus consolidate its democracy.

This brings us to the first specific problem: Nicaragua's external debt. An analysis of that debt in relation to other economic variables leads us to a second conclusion: that this debt is a burden which prevents Nicaragua from establishing a proper framework for productive investment. It is well-known that Nicaragua has the highest per capita debt level in the world and that its per capita gross national product ranks it among the least developed countries. The most recent calculations place this figure at approximately $400 per year.

The gross national product has been decreasing over the last four years by roughly 10 per cent. If we do not take measures similar to those recommended for Africa, such as forgiving the national debt, there will be no solution to the problem of Nicaragua. Argentina understands this and has forgiven the total debt of Nicaragua *vis-à-vis* Argentina - $76 million. This debt forgiveness has an absolute value in terms of its high level and also a relative one with respect to the indebtedness of other countries *vis-à-vis* Argentina. We hope that other creditor countries will follow this same course and that the General Assembly will be in a position to make policy recommendations along these lines.

A third conclusion stemming from an analysis of the other principal indicators is that we must focus on the sectors of health care; education; the elimination of obstacles to ownership of private property, particularly land; State reform; the establishment of the rule of law; and all activities which could contribute to Nicaragua's long-term, sustained and sustainable reactivation.

The United Nations system as a whole must be mobilized at the inter-sectoral level to rehabilitate Nicaragua and help it to develop. Much effort has already been exerted, especially by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), but it is still insufficient. Focusing efforts on Nicaragua will have a twofold positive impact: on the one hand, it will be possible to engage in operational activities within the framework of sustainable human development strategies that encompass all the areas where the United Nations has a comparative advantage; and, on the other, there will be international economic cooperation to strengthen a process of democratic consolidation that will have a positive effect on the entire Central American region.

The last issue concerns the kind of report on this question that we would like to see in the future. We appreciate the information in document A/49/487 because it gives us an idea of what has been done by the system and constitutes an analysis of the situation. Nevertheless, we would have liked to see some policy recommendations for enhancing the degree of commitment of the United Nations system *vis-à-vis* the rehabilitation process for Nicaragua's development in particular and the establishment of true, strong and lasting peace in Central America as a whole.

Mr. Yañez-Barnuevo (Spain) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: As we take up the item entitled "International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters", we must bear in mind that the international community

must continue to follow up carefully situations where, following grievous conflicts, it is necessary to engage in peace building. It is important, therefore, for the international community, by supporting the rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in Nicaragua, to help put a definitive end to armed conflict and to strengthen the country's stability and development.

Over the past few years, Nicaragua has been faced with some difficult challenges in the threefold process of transition which it has undergone since the conflict. This is a complicated process, and, after peace has been achieved, progress must be made in implementing economic and social structural reforms and in promoting new political and institutional reconstruction efforts in the country.

This process has at times been affected by events that, fortunately, no longer exist. But this is an indication of the fragility of the process. As the Secretary-General points out in his report to the Assembly:

> "... in spite of the achievements of the Nicaraguan transition, the country has not been able to advance in all areas and there is a lag in the socio-economic field in relation to the political and macroeconomic areas". *(A/49/487, para. 13)*

These uncertainties about the future make it necessary for us to continue to support this process in order to assist Nicaragua as it moves towards sustainable development.

The achievement of this objective not only is indispensable to the attainment of peace and prosperity in Nicaragua, but it also affects the entire Central American region. Resolution 48/161, adopted by the Assembly last year, demonstrated that the consolidation of peace in Nicaragua is a key factor of the Central American peace process. In that resolution, the Assembly welcomed with interest the initiative by the Government of Nicaragua concerning the establishment of an active group of friendly countries to play a particularly important role in supporting the reactivation of the economic and social development of Nicaragua, which would facilitate the strengthening of its institutional and democratic structures.

With the help of the Secretary-General, who has from the outset lent his full support to this initiative, a group of countries, including Spain, established a support group for Nicaragua in May 1994.

The Support Group, consisting of Canada, Mexico, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden, stemmed from the international community's realization of the need to monitor the dynamics of the country's transition process. By assessing the progress as well as the problems, the group is trying to foster joint efforts to promote the country's reconstruction and development as well as to bring to international forums a comprehensive idea of the process evolving in Nicaragua.

The Support Group works closely with the UNDP Office in Nicaragua. It is trying to assist the political and social efforts of Nicaragua so that, working together, they can decide on the priorities of development and national reconciliation.

In resolution 48/8, adopted by consensus at the last session, the General Assembly requested all Member States, the international funding agencies and regional intraregional and non-governmental organizations to continue providing support to Nicaragua to overcome the aftermath of war and natural disasters and to stimulate the process of reconstruction, social investment, stabilization and development.

Spain - as a nation and as a member of the European Union - has been giving a high priority and every possible form of assistance to Nicaragua at this crucial stage of the country's efforts to consolidate peace and democracy and to foster economic and social progress.

In the framework of bilateral projects, Spain is implementing a large number of programmes agreed upon with the Nicaraguan authorities, in areas such as education and training of human resources, institutional improvement, health care, urban and rural development and preservation of the cultural heritage. Spain is also providing food aid on a regular basis as well as assistance to regional programmes in Central America in which Nicaragua participates.

For all those reasons, Spain urges the Secretary-General and the United Nations system as a whole to continue to support and assist Nicaragua in its efforts at peace building, democratic reconstruction and development. My delegation has therefore joined in sponsoring draft resolution A/49/L.25/Rev.1 which we hope will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Runge (Germany): I wish to speak briefly at this point on behalf of the European Union, since agenda item 23, "International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua", is the first item to

come up for discussion in the General Assembly on special humanitarian and economic assistance questions.

In view of the constantly rising number of natural disasters and complex emergencies worldwide, the European Union fully supports the integrated approach taken by the United Nations system aimed at immediate relief measures and an effective continuum of activities from humanitarian aid to rehabilitation and long-term development. It is with concern, therefore, that we note that the number of resolutions containing, in one form or another, individual appeals for humanitarian and economic assistance is also rising.

The European Union recognizes the needs that underlie each and every one of these appeals. We are concerned, however, that the considerable number of resolutions submitted individually will not be able to raise further the level of support. We therefore urge Member States to fully support and comply with the efforts undertaken with a view to streamlining the relevant decision-making processes of the Assembly through, *inter alia*, the biennialization and clustering of items.

Mr. Cohen (Israel): Israel was pleased to join the sponsors of draft resolution A/49/L.25/Rev.1. We are confident that the General Assembly will adopt it by consensus.

We have consistently expressed our readiness to cooperate with Nicaragua in the many areas related to its rehabilitation and reconstruction. We are glad to note that, since the democratically elected Government was established, we have been able to carry out such cooperation. For this reason, we welcomed Nicaragua's invitation to participate as an observer in the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held in Managua last July.

Israeli technical cooperation with Nicaragua is at a historic peak, and we hope to enhance it further through additional programmes conducted by the Centre for International Cooperation of our Ministry for Foreign Affairs. These programmes are designed to share, through courses in Israel and on-site courses in Nicaragua, Israeli know-how and experience in all areas: agriculture, community development, health, education and development of democratic institutions.

We look forward to further cooperation, and we express the hope that other countries will join in the important mission of promoting development there. It is our hope that such activities will help strengthen stability and democracy in Nicaragua and throughout the region.

Mr. Castaneda-Cornejo (El Salvador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): In my capacity as Chairman of the Central American Group, I have the honour of speaking on behalf of Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama and El Salvador to state once again that we Central Americans believe that Nicaragua's efforts to consolidate peace, democracy and sustainable development are worthy of support.

Under the leadership of President Chamorro, the Government of Nicaragua has been making progress in its efforts to leave behind its complicated and painful recent history of confrontation, destruction and crisis, which in the last decade affected in one way or another the lives and the hearts of all Central Americans.

In this new decade, the pacification of the region has gone beyond cease-fire and demobilization and has moved into cooperation and integration. Our agenda for peace in Central America, on which we have been working since the Esquipulas agreements, has been complemented by subsequent agreements adopted by the Presidents of Central American countries at regional summit meetings. Those agreements are rich in content dealing with society, economics, education, culture, ecology, security, commerce, development and the modernization of our societies.

This integrationist agenda simply reflects the will of our peoples and is the result of the daily efforts of our Central American Governments to achieve lasting solutions by going straight to the root of the problems that led to the confrontation that weighed us down in the past. In the search for those solutions, we Central Americans have decided to commit ourselves to a broad integrationist effort with an emphasis on supporting tasks that each Government is carrying out nationally and locally. Nicaragua's efforts in that context are deserving of appreciation and should enjoy the necessary support of the international community. We should bear in mind that the task of political, economic and social reconstruction and rehabilitation is considerably more difficult for that country because of the burden its people bear as a result of a past of fratricidal war, a fractured economy, an overwhelming external debt that gives it no leeway for social investment and the highest per capita debt in the world, as well as other structural problems that the Secretary-General points out in his report contained in document A/49/487.

Since 1990 Nicaragua has been meeting the challenges of a complex transition and showing a firm commitment to the path of peace, democracy, freedom, justice and comprehensive progress for its people. In each of those spheres of action there have been clearly identifiable achievements, as reflected in the Secretary-General's report, such as the disarming of civilians, reduction of the army, restructuring and reduction of the public sector, broad prioritization of social expenditures and economic investment in the national budget and effective and balanced powers of State.

In short, the Government of Nicaragua's management of this transition process deserves our broadest recognition. The people of Nicaragua has made its sacrifice in the form of the required adjustment and has placed its hopes in democracy and peace. In this context, now is not the time to consider our work completed. The after-effects of the war run particularly deep in that country, and it requires the sustained, predictable and balanced support of the international community to deal with areas that have been neglected while other, passing challenges have been met.

The challenge is a complex one for Nicaragua and, therefore, for Central America. As the Secretary-General points out in his report,

> "the delay in [certain spheres] may impair the overall transition process." *(A/49/487, para. 5)*

In this context, we must decide what are the proper levels of support, bearing in mind the kinds of measures that Nicaragua is taking towards consolidating its achievements, its priorities and the factors essential for its development. If it can achieve a higher degree of political stability, it will be able to deal with the very complex problems that constitute the most serious obstacles on the path to permanent recovery. A more stable situation now prevails in Nicaragua, and this justifies investment in the efforts to reinvigorate the economy, over and above the assistance necessary to overcome the crisis.

Therefore the international community must increase its efforts to consolidate the sustained progress and ensure that it lasts.

With a view to strengthening these achievements, the Central American countries resolutely support the people and Government of Nicaragua, aware as we are that the efforts of the Central American region to solve its own problems have been yielding very positive results during the current decade and that the experience gained in our transition towards peace and sustainable development can contribute to the establishment of a more stable and just future on the continent and, therefore, in the world in this new era of cooperation.

Thus we unreservedly support the draft resolution contained in document A/49/L.25/Rev.1, and we hope that it will be adopted unanimously.

Mr. Ferrarin (Italy): Italy fully endorses the statement that was made by Germany in its capacity as President of the European Union and wishes to express its appreciation for the Secretary-General's report (A/49/487) on international assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua.

In recent years the people of Nicaragua have taken great strides forward in reconstructing their country after the civil war that for many years obstructed its normal development and damaged the fabric of its society and economy. However - and this is not unlike the myth of Sisyphus - at the first signs of economic recovery and the rebirth of civic coexistence, these efforts were in danger of being erased by natural disasters and an extended drought.

In its support for development, Italy has always demonstrated special sensitivity to joint action with international organizations that fosters the participation of local populations. This is the direction in which the Government in Managua is moving.

It is well known that over the last few years Italy has contributed to support for the peace process in Central America through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) by granting $115 million towards establishing the Development Programme for Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees (PRODERE). The Managua Government has enthusiastically endorsed PRODERE's development philosophy by implementing a decentralized development policy. Here I am pleased to quote the words of the Nicaraguan Minister of the Presidency, Mr. Antonio Lacayo:

> "Concerted action and social dialogue at the local level make it possible to identify the main problems and find the solutions to be included in national development planning."

In this sense, and in the framework of PRODERE, the Nicaraguan Government is implementing an important

pilot project in Nueva Segovia and in Jinotega, with technical assistance from PRODERE.

One of PRODERE's contributions is of special symbolic importance. I refer to the transformation of the military fortress of Estancia Cora in northern Nicaragua into a centre for professional training that functions today on a self-sustaining basis.

In conclusion, Italy wishes to express its solidarity with the people of Nicaragua in their vigorous pursuit of political reconciliation and economic reconstruction. These goals require not only national efforts but also the support of the international community. Italy continues to offer its unwavering political support to Nicaragua through bilateral and multilateral channels, and I have the honour of informing the Assembly that we are pleased to be a sponsor of draft resolution A/49/L.25/Rev.1.

The President *(interpretation from French):* We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/49/L.25/Rev.1.

The following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas and the Netherlands.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/49/L.25/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/49/L.25/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 49/16).

The President *(interpretation from French):* May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 23?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 158

Report of the International Conference on Population and Development: report of the Conference (A/CONF.171/13 and Add.1)

The President *(interpretation from French):* Members will recall that at its 3rd plenary meeting, held on 23 September 1994, the Assembly decided to hold the debate on item 158 directly in plenary meeting, on the understanding that action on it would be taken in the Second Committee.

I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be closed today at noon.

It was so decided.

The President *(interpretation from French):* I therefore request those representatives wishing to participate in the debate to inscribe their names on the list of speakers as soon as possible.

Mr. Lamamra (Algeria) *(interpretation from French):* I have the privilege of speaking on behalf of the delegations of the countries members of the Group of 77 and of China on the International Conference on Population and Development, which a fraternal country, Egypt, had the honour and the generosity to host from 5 to 13 September 1994 and which will without any doubt remain one of the outstanding activities undertaken by the United Nations in the crucial sphere of harmonizing the policies of Member States and strengthening international cooperation for development.

Indeed, the importance of population questions and their dynamic relationship with socio-economic development in all our societies was fully grasped by the international community in general and by Governments and others involved at the national level. The record degree of participation in, and the high quality of the work done at, the Cairo Conference attest to a universal awareness of the essential role of population as it relates to the overall problems of development.

The Cairo Conference followed the two Conferences that had previously been held on population, in Bucharest in 1974 and in Mexico City in 1984, and it drew on the experience and maturity gained there in approaching the three linked issues - population, development and the environment - and reached the results whose scope we are now in a position to appreciate.

Indeed, the Programme of Action that resulted from the work of the Cairo Conference was innovative in that it marked a break with traditional approaches, which merely supplied statistics of demographic trends in isolation. Thus, the Programme of Action gives special attention to a broad range of elements that together and simultaneously exercise a definite influence on the dynamic that links population with sustained economic

growth and sustainable development. Stress was therefore placed on the family, women, access to education, the protection of the mother and child, the fight against poverty, and respect for human dignity in its manifold needs.

In sum, the Programme of Action placed the human being at the centre of its attention and projections, since the human being is the artisan and beneficiary of development in its economic, social and environmental dimensions.

The consensus reached in Cairo made possible the success of the Conference despite the disturbing pessimism of some, and it has given us grounds for hope.

Notwithstanding their complex and controversial aspects, and despite the exaggerated and sometimes artificially generated attention that was devoted to them, the questions of a highly moral nature did not, fortunately, divert attention from the main thrust of the Conference. Those who had a direct interest in the result of the negotiations met the challenge posed by certain aspects of the document that were sensitive by virtue of their relationship with diverse cultures, religions, traditions and other moral values. In this context, the delegations of the developing countries, as usual, demonstrated a keen sense of responsibility by making a constructive contribution to the debate.

In this spirit, the Group of 77 had the privilege of initiating the introduction to the 15 principles contained in the Cairo document, which will guide the international community's efforts in implementing the Conference's recommendations for the next two decades. This introduction states with the utmost clarity the sovereign right of States to formulate population policies in conformity with their development priorities and with full respect for the ethical, religious and cultural values of their peoples. No one doubts that all multilateral cooperation in this matter must be based on the concern that these fundamental parameters be respected. It is worth stressing that the discussions that will be taking place in the preparatory processes for future international conferences, in particular the World Summit on Social Development and the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, will certainly spare us some effort and energy if these guidelines are duly reflected and borne in mind as a given that it would not be wise to debate further. Indeed, the history of human beings shows us that the diversity of social, cultural and civilizational realities, which are such a rich asset of the international community, cannot and should not be reduced to simplistic notions of uniformity, which can never work.

The quantitative objectives of the Programme of Action require the attention and constant mobilization of the international community. I refer in particular to the reduction of infant and maternal mortality rates, which, despite the progress made at the global level, remain high on average in several developing countries and regions by comparison with universally recognized norms. The objective advocated here is to reduce the gap between developed and developing countries by improving the health care and nutrition of mothers and children. It has been acknowledged that this goal can be achieved if national efforts are supported by the international community. Access to basic education for all children and the sustained action that must be taken by the developing countries to reduce illiteracy form part of this approach. It is appropriate for me to express regret that despite the decisive importance this question has for any integrated population policy, education has not been given the attention it deserves among the four main components set forth in chapter XIII, which contains estimates for funding levels to meet the needs of the developing countries for the period 2000 to 2015.

From a conceptual point of view, which one hopes will result in practical and operational action, the Cairo Conference did identify responsibilities for the worsening of poverty and its consequences for the environment. It went beyond the narrow context of population problems, for which the cliché "population explosion" is very often wrongly used. It clearly established that patterns of production and consumption in the rich countries are not in every respect compatible with the needs of sustainable development.

Because of the diversified, intersectoral and multi - disciplinary nature of the recommendations and objectives adopted by the Cairo Conference, broad national participation in an ongoing endeavour covering all aspects of the problems of population and development, with the active and decisive assistance of all those involved, is required if they are to be achieved.

National efforts must naturally be supplemented by joint action at the subregional and regional levels to ensure beneficial and effective interaction. In this context, it is important to strengthen the capacities of the subregional and regional agencies, including the regional economic commissions, to enable them to play their full role, particularly in the area of the exchange of

experience, the collection, analysis and dissemination of data, and the carrying out the studies that are necessary to achieve the objectives of the Cairo Conference. Accordingly, institutions of the United Nations system are more than ever called upon to make the qualitative and quantitative contribution expected of them, particularly in terms of expertise and the transfer of science and technology to strengthen research programmes and assist in the development of the national capacities of the developing countries in these areas.

The importance, indeed the urgency, of fully implementing the Cairo Programme of Action requires the rapid mobilization of the human and financial resources indispensable to carrying out the manifold and multiform action to which the international community agreed, to the satisfaction of all.

In this spirit, the countries members of the Group of 77 and China, on whose behalf I am honoured to speak, have demonstrated their unequivocal commitment to this objective by agreeing to the Secretariat's estimates on the funding levels required for the years 2000 to 2015 - levels which place their own contribution at two thirds of the entire sum. This clearly shows the determination of the developing countries fully to shoulder their responsibilities in this regard. Given the imperative need to ensure that the Cairo Programme of Action does not remain mere wishful thinking, and given also the immensity of the task in this framework, our partners, the developed countries, are called upon to make up the additional resources in conformity with commitments undertaken under chapters XIII and XIV of the Programme of Action. Moreover, it has been unanimously acknowledged that the implementation of the various components of the Programme of Action will require new and additional resources to support the efforts to be made by the developing countries, in particular the least developed among them, to strengthen their programmes for combating the poverty rife in several areas of the world. We therefore hope that all participants in the political and moral contract concluded in Cairo will strive to implement all its provisions with the good faith and enthusiasm commensurate with what is at stake for mankind.

The importance of follow-up and evaluation of the implementation of the Programme of Action is obvious and does not need to be demonstrated. It is in this spirit that chapter XVI of the Programme of Action stresses the central role to be played by the General Assembly, as the most representative political and intergovernmental organ, in the formulation and consideration of policies on questions of follow-up to the Conference. In this context, paragraph 16.25 particularly stresses the need for an in-depth analysis of the capacities of existing mechanisms, particularly the United Nations Population Fund, the Population Commission and the Population Division of the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis. In this connection, the delegations of the countries members of the Group of 77 and China are currently considering a draft resolution, to be submitted to the Second Committee on this subject, that fully reflects the pertinent provisions of chapter XVI. Without prejudice to the final result of this exercise, we believe that an additional effort must be made at the system-wide level to achieve better coordination among the agencies involved in follow-up action so as to find an integrated approach to the better distribution of tasks and roles for harmonizing procedures in the submission of reports to the Economic and Social Council.

In order to make things clearer at the 1995 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, which will be considering the roles, responsibilities, mandates and comparative advantages of the intergovernmental organs and agencies involved in population issues, and in the discussions to be held under the review mechanism established by resolution 48/162 on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, the Secretariat should prepare a study on future institutional arrangements.

Before concluding, I wish to reiterate the appreciation and thanks of the delegations of the countries members of the Group of 77 and China to Ms. Nafis Sadiq for her efforts to ensure the success of the Cairo Conference. Our thanks go also to Egypt for its hospitality, its generous welcome, and its organizational work to facilitate the deliberations and success of the Conference.

Mr. Henze (Germany): I am speaking on behalf of the European Union.

The Cairo International Conference on Population and Development was a great success. The stakes were high. The spirit of Cairo was apparent throughout our negotiations. We produced an agenda on population and development for the coming 20 years that reflects what we feel is needed for a common future of humanity. We can all be proud of that.

I would like to pay particular tribute to our host, Egypt, and to Ms. Sadik, the Secretary-General of the Conference, and her team. They did their utmost to ensure the eventual success of our work on the Programme of Action.

Mr. Lopes de Rosa (Guinea-Bissau), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Programme of Action redefines the global agenda for population activities. We have moved from the earlier emphasis on demography and population control to a focus on sustainable development, including sustainable consumption and production patterns, mutual and individual rights and responsibilities, women's rights and the freedom to choose in particular with regard to child spacing and reproductive health. To this extent, the International Conference was a major conference on sustainable development, closely linked to previous United Nations Conferences, especially the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and such upcoming Conferences as the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women. These Conferences can and should build on the achievements of Cairo. The European Union endorses fully the Programme of Action of Cairo.

We are highly gratified by the consensus on financial issues that we were able to reach in Cairo. It shows the serious financial commitment in particular of developing countries, which deserves the support of the international community. The European Union again confirms its intention and commitment to make substantial increases in its contribution to population programmes to help raise the one third of overall funds needed from international resources. Some States members of the European Union and the European Commission have already pledged substantial increases, and others will follow. The result of the pledging conference two weeks ago is in this respect also somewhat promising. The United Nations Population Fund expects an increase for 1995 of 15 per cent to a level of $300 million. The remaining two thirds of the needed overall annual resource allocations are to be provided by the public and private sectors of individual countries themselves. The European Union believes that, as stated in the Programme of Action, domestic-resource mobilization efforts of the least developed and other low-income developing countries have to be complemented by a significantly greater share of international resources.

I now turn to the main task of the near future, the institutional follow-up of the International Conference on Population and Development in the United Nations and its monitoring. Chapter XVI of the Programme of Action has given us some ideas how it could be organized. Unlike the follow-up to the two previous Conferences on population, this time we have to adjust institutional arrangements to the integrated approach on population and development taken by the Conference. We have to check whether the existing structures are still suitable or whether they need appropriate adjustment. In doing so, we have to bear in mind the broader context. Any adjustment in the United Nations system for the follow-up of the International Conference must also be seen in relation to forthcoming United Nations Conferences, such as the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women and the consequences adjustments may have for their respective follow-up processes.

The Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly are the real monitors of the follow-up process. Since the Council has a coordinating responsibility for all areas covered by the Programme of Action, it seems to us that it would be best placed to act as the principal monitoring mechanism. The assumption of such a responsibility would be a valuable test-case of whether the Economic and Social Council is capable of undertaking such a substantive task. The high-level part of the operational activities segment of the Council is already scheduled to discuss the follow-up next year.

In our view, the present structures for the time being serve our common interest in ensuring adequate institutional arrangements for the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development. After Rio, the situation was different. There was no commission with a mandate for sustainable development. On the other hand, the Commission on Population - a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council - has been in existence since 1946. We believe that this Commission should and could play a useful role in the follow-up to Cairo. Its mandate and its functioning should be reviewed and adjusted accordingly, so as to respond to the much broader scope and integrated approach of the Cairo Programme of Action.

The European Union encourages a complementary approach between the Population Division of the Secretariat and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in terms of their respective mandates. We hope to see some pragmatic arrangements that would ensure cooperation between the Executive Director of UNFPA and the Population Division in order to ensure overall

coordination of the population activities of the United Nations system.

During the past 25 years, UNFPA has become one of the most important players in the field of multilateral population and development assistance. Its impartiality and responsiveness to the specific needs of individual developing countries represent a unique comparative advantage. Together with the Population Division, UNFPA also played a significant role in ensuring the success of the International Conference on Population and Development. The European Union will continue to provide strong support for UNFPA and its activities in the future. With regard to the proposal made by UNFPA to establish a separate executive board, and bearing in mind resolution 48/162, the European Union does not currently see a case for such a board. But we believe that the Fund has to adjust itself to the integrated approach of the Programme of Action.

There is a clear consensus that the various organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations as well as national and regional institutions have to review, strengthen and adjust their plans, programmes and activities in the aftermath of the Conference. Where appropriate, the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, including the Commission for Social Development, should do likewise. Collaboration with non-governmental organizations and community groups is vitally important in this respect. Without the commitment of the non-governmental part of our societies, the implementation of the Programme of Action will be hampered or even fail.

To assess progress, an enhanced database is crucial. We know that the quality of national reports depends very much on the availability of sound data. To minimize the burden of preparing such national reports, the European Union underlines the proposal in paragraph 16.13 of the Programme of Action to seek an appropriate consolidated reporting system for the follow-up to all United Nations conferences in related fields. Where possible, such national reports should be compatible with national sustainable development plans that countries will be preparing in the context of the implementation of Agenda 21.

The European Union is committed to achieving the goals and objectives contained in the Programme of Action. We trust that all Member States will be in a position to agree on an appropriate institutional adjustment for the United Nations system to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Programme of Action. Under chapter XVI of the Programme of Action, the Economic and Social Council should be involved in the preparation of the institutional set-up before the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly takes final action. What we need now is the General Assembly's endorsement of the resolution under which the Programme of Action was adopted in Cairo. And we need to indicate what kind of input and what report we expect from the Secretary-General as a basis for our further discussions at the Economic and Social Council's substantive session in July 1995. The European Union is ready to extend positive cooperation in the Second Committee to achieve consensus on such a resolution.

Mrs. El-Islambouly (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I should like at the outset to express my delegation's support for the statement made by the delegation of Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. I wish also to avail myself of this opportunity to thank the many delegations that have paid tribute, on many occasions since the beginning of the current session of the General Assembly, to Egypt's efforts as the host country of the Conference, both in the general debate and during the consideration of relevant items in the various Committees.

My delegation welcomes the report of the International Conference on Population and Development contained in document A/CONF.171/13. My delegation also pays tribute to the sincere efforts and constructive cooperation of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and of Dr. Nafis Sadik, the Secretary-General of the Conference during the preparatory period and during the Conference proper, which Egypt was pleased to host in September 1994. The organizational and substantive success the Conference achieved has been a source of satisfaction for the entire international community.

The Conference's successful adoption of a Programme of Action by unprecedented consensus generated a sense of elation which continues to this day. The adoption of the Programme of Action testifies to the success of over one hundred and eighty States in conducting a fruitful dialogue between various cultures and civilizations, which led ultimately to a consensual agreement without any attempt by any one party to impose its views or beliefs on any other. The Programme of Action is an important document of a comprehensive nature and a new method of dealing with population questions from a proper perspective, namely their relatedness to development issues. The Programme constitutes a guide that will be depended upon in

formulating population policies and programmes for the next twenty years or so, at the national, regional and international levels. The Programme of Action dealt with matters of extreme importance, such as the relationship between population, sustainable economic growth and sustainable development; questions relating to reproductive health; the empowerment of women, gender equality, male responsibilities; the family; the elderly; family planning; internal displacement and international migration; and the role of non-governmental organizations. In addition, the programme dealt with the quantitative objectives and estimates of the financial commitments needed for its implementation. This is what took place in Cairo: a success that crowned the efforts of the international community in preparing for this important Conference.

What about the future? The success achieved in Cairo must be viewed as the beginning of a serious international movement aimed at the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Programme of Action. There is a need to maintain the momentum generated by the success of the Conference. There is a need to increase awareness of the Programme of Action at international, regional and national levels. There is also a need to ensure that programmes of action that will be adopted in Copenhagen and Beijing next year and in Istanbul the year after, will reflect what was contained in the Cairo Programme of Action on matters relating to population, social development, the empowerment of women, the preservation of the environment and other relevant questions.

The real success of the International Conference on Population and Development is contingent upon the provision of the financial resources to which States have committed themselves so as to make possible the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Programme of Action.

This success is also contingent on the follow-up, monitoring and review of the achievements made in the implementation of those recommendations at the national level through increased awareness of the Programme of Action and the formulation of national programmes and policies to implement its recommendations. That could be achieved through maintaining the national committees that participated in the preparatory process of the Conference or through the establishment of new national machinery.

At the regional level, this could be achieved by promoting the role of regional committees, organizations and development banks. At the international level, it could be achieved by establishing effective follow-up machinery. That could be defined during the current session of the General Assembly and the coming session of the Economic and Social Council.

The situation calls for an intergovernmental follow-up machinery to periodically review progress towards the achievement of the objectives of the Programme of Action, define the difficulties and impediments that stand in the way, and arrive at the necessary solutions.

Since the general consensus is to work through current existing machinery either at the intergovernmental level or at the Secretariat level, without developing or establishing new bureaucratic structures, the Population Commission might be the appropriate organ to carry out the follow-up role. The Commission is one of the technical committees of the Economic and Social Council. Choosing it to play this role constitutes a logical option and could also constitute a link in an integrated framework for following up and implementing the decisions and results of previous and forthcoming United Nations conferences.

We envisage an integrated framework in which the Commission on Sustainable Development would follow up the decisions of Rio de Janeiro, the Commission on Human Rights would follow up those of Vienna, the Population Commission would follow up those of Cairo, the Commission on Social Development would follow up those of Copenhagen, the Commission on the Status of Women would follow up those of Beijing, and the Commission on Human Settlements would follow up the decisions of Istanbul.

The use of the Population Commission as the machinery to follow up the decisions of Cairo is not only a practical and logical option within the aforementioned integrated whole, but is also consistent with the spirit and letter of General Assembly resolution 48/162 in a manner that would make it possible to follow up the decisions of the Conference through three intergovernmental structures: the Population Commission which presents its follow-up reports to the Economic and Social Council, which in turn would crystallize and analyse those reports and refer them to the third structure, namely the General Assembly.

In order for the Population Commission to perform this role, there is need to reactivate it, modernize its mandate and terms of reference which have not changed since 1946. Thus the Commission would be changed

from one of demographic experts to an intergovernmental committee dealing with questions of population in terms of their relationship to development, and not from a purely demographic perspective.

In order for the Population Commission to perform the role of follow-up machinery, it will be necessary also to increase its membership from 27 to 53 so as to achieve the greatest degree of transparency in following up the decisions of the Commission. It will be necessary as well to change the timetable of its sessions so that it may meet annually instead of biennially. This would ensure the continuity of the follow-up process.

In addition to the role of the Population Commission as an intergovernmental follow-up machinery, we also believe the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) could play a very important role in providing the Population Commission with information on all operational activities relating to multilateral population programmes.

Last month, we observed the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations Population Fund. That event occasioned a well-deserved tribute to the important pioneering role played by the Fund since its establishment in supporting population programmes and policies of developing countries in the framework of United Nations operational activities for development.

Proceeding from this, we support the recommendation contained in Chapter XVI of the Programme of Action on giving further consideration to the establishment of a separate Executive Board of the United Nations Population Fund. We also support assigning to the United Nations Population Fund the primary responsibility, within the United Nations system, for mobilizing the necessary financial resources for the implementation of the Programme of Action.

On the other hand, we envisage an important role for the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis in providing the Population Commission with information on population trends and studies relevant to population questions in terms of their relationship to sustainable development, and in reviewing periodically the progress made in implementing the Programme of Action. Proceeding from this we call for a strengthening of the abilities and resources of this important Division in order for it to be able to carry out its role within the follow-up machinery.

In addition to the aforementioned we refer to the importance of the establishment of an inter-agency committee on questions of population and development that would be subsidiary to the Advisory Committee on Coordination in order to coordinate the activities of the relevant United Nations organs, agencies, programmes and funds both at Headquarters and in the field.

The success of the Conference in adopting the Programme of Action and the success of the current session of the General Assembly and the next session of the Economic and Social Council in creating the optimum machinery for follow-up, will remain deficient unless all Member States commit themselves to mobilizing the financial resources necessary to implement the recommendations of the Programme of Action in the manner mentioned in Chapter XIII of the Programme. This success could be strengthened by non-governmental organizations taking an active role in the coming stage as a sequel to the important and active role played by those organizations in preparing for the Conference, during the Conference proper, and in the meetings of the parallel forum of non-governmental organizations.

We are confident that the great interest shown by all parties will ensure that the success achieved in Cairo will be sustained and the momentum generated by that success will be maintained with the aim of achieving the goal of a better life for present and future generations.

Mr. Wisnumurti (Indonesia): I should like to begin by expressing the Indonesian delegation's sincere appreciation to the Chairman of the Group of 77 for his lucid statement, with which my delegation fully associates itself.

My delegation welcomes the outcome of the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development and applauds the sense of inclusion and cooperation with which the complex, important and often sensitive issues were addressed. We also trust that the Conference's sweeping Programme of Action will constitute a veritable blueprint for shifting the ominous course of population trends onto a more sustainable path. To do that, however, the spirit of cooperation and partnership that permeated the Conference must carry over into its implementation phase. We hope that the Assembly will not only endorse the Cairo Programme of Action but that it will also seek to maintain and build upon the momentum generated by the Conference and its preparatory process to ensure its timely implementation. If that can be accomplished, the prediction of the Conference's Secretary-General,

Mrs. Sadik, at the closing meeting, that this Programme of Action has the potential to change the world, could very well prove to be true.

The International Conference on Population and Development at Cairo, like the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and unlike the former population conferences at Bucharest and Mexico, tackled the population question within the broad context of development. As a developing country with the fourth largest population in the world, Indonesia is particularly pleased that the growing recognition of the interlinkage between population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development was reflected in the principles of the Programme of Action. The linkages between poverty and population policies have also been clearly acknowledged and, if implemented, should serve to raise the quality of life of the poor. Since Indonesia has adhered to the principle of people-centred development and to the importance of human-resource development, we believe that such an approach represents a definitive means for enlarging the options and choices available to the people for improving their well-being.

Human-resource development has proved to be central to the struggle to combat the scourge of poverty, redress unemployment and alleviate a broad range of political and social problems. For we believe it is only through such human-resource development and capacity-building, including the participation of women, that sustained economic growth and sustainable development can be effectively promoted and the alleviation of poverty advanced. Therefore, programmes designed to achieve these objectives, including such measures as increased access to information, education and training, employment opportunities and improved health services should be given top priority.

For our part, we in indonesia, particularly since we have been placing increased emphasis on human - or people-centred - development for some time, have sought to strike an overall balance between individual, family and community rights and the right to development. In this context, Indonesia has for quite some time been implementing the first phase of its population approach, designed to create "small, happy and prosperous families". While the first part of this objective has been achieved, the other two parts have not been adequately addressed. The second phase of the approach, which was launched prior to and in anticipation of the outcome of the Cairo Conference, calls again for small prosperous families, but this time, as agents and beneficiaries of development.

Indonesia is also pleased that the Programme highlights the sovereign right of each country to implement the recommendations of the Programme consistent with its national laws and development priorities, with full respect for the various religious and ethical values and cultural backgrounds of its people and in conformity with universally recognized human rights. This recognition therefore, would help avoid unnecessary controversy that may arise if acutely sensitive questions were addressed globally.

Another principle adopted in the Programme on which my delegation would like to briefly comment is that of the need to advance gender equality, equity and the empowerment of women. From time immemorial, women have held the central role in the family but have, at the same time, often been economically and socially discriminated against and marginalized. What has now become obvious is that there exists a strong relationship between the advancement of women and the lowering in fertility rates. The more economically advanced women have become, and the more choices and options available to them, the smaller their families tend to become. The fulfilment of women's potential through education and employment beyond traditional roles, as well as the elimination of discrimination and violence and punitive practices against them, have inevitably reduced fertility rates. This is not to negate the unique and indispensable role of women in the family. Indeed, compatibility between the participation of women in the labour force and parental responsibilities should be upheld and greatly facilitated. In this context, we particularly welcome the specific quantitative goals of the Programme of Action in the areas of decreased mortality, increased education, especially for girls, and increased access to family-planning information and services.

A critical element in the implementation of the Programme is that of international cooperation, since population and development concerns are a matter for global partnership. Central to such cooperation should be the promotion of national capacity-building, the increase in transfers of appropriate technology and the provision of adequate financial resources for implementing the activities and achieving the objectives of the Programme.

Since partnership is essentially based on the mutuality of interests and benefits, shared responsibilities and genuine interdependence, it is vitally important that each party fulfil its respective part. While Governments have the primary responsibility for pursuing the objective of national capacity building for population and

development and for adapting their development plans accordingly, it is imperative that the international community promote a supportive economic environment by adopting favourable macroeconomic policies for sustained economic growth and development. Chapters XIII and XIV have set out the objectives and actions for cultivating such a partnership. We must therefore seek ways and means to strengthen such partnership so as to ensure that we do not experience a pattern of limited action such as the one that has so far characterized the aftermath of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The requisite political will, expressed in the form of tangible support, is paramount if we are to move forward in fully implementing the Programme.

Nowhere is partnership for population and development more important than in the area of financial resources. Although national action is of primary importance - and indeed, the bulk of resources are being raised domestically - there is also a growing need to increase substantially the availability of international financial assistance in the field of population and development so as to ensure the success of national efforts. It is encouraging to note that financial cooperation has been steadily increasing over the past two decades and that non-governmental organizations and the private sector, as well as international institutions, have become increasingly involved. Likewise, the emergence of various types of partnership configurations is a positive development. We sincerely hope that this consensus will hold and will be translated into action in the form of actual financial resource flows for population programmes.

Additional resources are needed. Ideally, they could be mobilized from official development assistance by an increased effort on the part of the international community to reach the agreed targets for official development assistance. Only through the provision of adequate resources can population growth levels be lowered from the higher to the lower projected figures of the United Nations. At the same time, recipient countries should ensure that international assistance for population and development activities is used effectively to meet national population and development objectives so as to assist donors in securing further commitments on resources for implementing the Programme of Action. Moreover, my delegation would also like to state that the new phenomenon of increased involvement by non-governmental organizations and the private sector should be further encouraged and that such entities should be invited to participate, in partnership with Governments, in all stages of programme formulation, implementation, financing and monitoring. It is important that their unique potential should not be wasted; it should be further fostered.

In the spirit of international cooperation on population and development issues, many developing countries have already engaged in close collaboration. It is in this light that we see the need for strengthening South-South cooperation so that it can play an effective role in implementing the Programme of Action. For our part, we in Indonesia have extended South-South assistance, especially in the area of family planning, which has been recognized as very successful. In doing this, we have found that two innovative means have been particularly helpful in advancing and strengthening such South-South cooperation. The first is the evolutionary approach, whereby two or more countries initiate projects while leaving the door open for others to join at later stages whenever they see fit. We have also sought to develop trilateral financing arrangements, whereby various configurations of South-South and North-South partnerships can be promoted. In this connection, I am pleased to note that, in anticipation of the outcome of the Conference, together with a number of developing countries and with the support of various agencies and organizations, we were able in Cairo to launch a pilot South-South arrangement named "Partners in population and development: A South-South initiative", which we believe could greatly help facilitate the development of a genuine partnership based on mutuality of interests and benefits and equitably shared responsibility for the implementation of the Programme of Action.

As to follow-up action, given the wide-ranging and comprehensive outcome of the Conference, we see a significant need to strengthen greatly both the Population Commission and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). To this end, the Commission's mandate and composition should be reviewed and strengthened so as to enable it to become an effective intergovernmental body for pursuing the follow-up activities of the Conference and for monitoring, reviewing and assessing the implementation of the Programme of Action. The UNFPA should also be strengthened so as to increase its effectiveness as the operational arm of the United Nations in the field of population and development. In the light of resolution 48/162, on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, I believe that there is a need for a separate Executive Board for the UNFPA.

In conclusion, as we chart our journey into the twenty-first century and beyond, we have some powerful

levers and blueprints, such as the Cairo Programme of Action, within our grasp to help us set a sustainable course towards a promising future. We must not forfeit that promise.

Mrs. Rehn (Finland): I am speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries: Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland.

First and foremost, let me congratulate my dear friend Nafis Sadik and her staff on their dedicated work on the International Conference on Population and Development. Let me also thank Egypt for the excellent arrangements and warm hospitality we all enjoyed.

The Conference in Cairo was a success. Its Programme of Action is a milestone to which the Nordic countries give their full support. At the same time, the Programme is a challenge to Governments and to the international community.

Cairo confirmed that population-related issues are an inherent part of the global agenda for sustainable development. The Nordic countries welcome this. The main elements of population and development issues - education, health, empowerment of women, sustained economic growth, the environment, and consumption and production patterns - and their interlinkages are also addressed coherently in the Programme of Action. The new thinking in the Programme, especially on the concept of reproductive health and rights, needs to be put into effect with determination. The individual is rightly in the centre of population and development issues, and should be provided with the necessary enabling environment to realize his or her rights, choices and responsibilities. This is the primary responsibility of Governments.

The Cairo agreement must be carried forward at all levels: local, national, regional and international. The message from Cairo must be followed up not only by Member States, but also by society at large as well as by the United Nations and other international organizations. Cairo was one in a string of summits and conferences; it is to be followed by the World Summit for Social Development, the World Conference on Women and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). The message must be carried over to these conferences.

The clearest signal from Cairo is seen in the spirit of consensus and the recognition of shared global challenges. Other key messages include the need to bring forward the progress made on gender issues, on reproductive health and rights and on the rights and needs of adolescents and children. As regards children, let me also refer to the important debate we have just had in the Third Committee on the promotion of the rights of the child, something we must always have in mind.

Linkages between population and the sustainable use of natural resources also need further refinement. I would like to mention in particular that the progress made in Cairo will serve as an important base for the Beijing World Conference on Women to build on. Let me stress here that we must not forget the role and responsibilities of men.

The main part of the implementation of the Programme of Action will take place outside the United Nations. I would like to underline the importance of actions at the national level, which are the true test. We expect to see concrete action, operational strategies, genuine grass-roots efforts and public support for changes in official policies related to population and development. The dissemination of the Programme of Action is vital. Capacity-building for national action is of the utmost importance, and must encompass the capabilities of non-governmental organizations, especially various women's organizations as well as health and environmental organizations.

At the international level, it is not only the United Nations and the international financial institutions that have an important role to play. Non-governmental and other intergovernmental bodies, as well as the private sector and the research community, are highly relevant. They all must review their agendas and approaches to respond to the call from Cairo.

The outcome and follow-up of the International Conference on Population and Development must be seen in a larger global development context, in which the United Nations system is central. We strongly support the Secretary-General in his view that concerted action towards development is urgently needed. The five pillars in his Agenda for Development - peace, economic growth, environmental protection, social justice, and democracy and human rights - are parts of an indivisible whole. From the present series of conferences there seems to be emerging a new framework of human-centred and socially oriented development. The Secretary-General's recommendations in the Agenda for Development map out the United Nations role in furthering the emerging concept. This is the wider

perspective against which the follow-up of the Conference must be discussed.

The General Assembly, as the body responsible for overall policy formulation, has to take decisions on the Conference follow-up in the United Nations system. These include discussion and decision-making on the issues of institutional arrangements, monitoring and reporting, coordination and funding. These issues will require further preparatory work prior to next year's session of the Economic and Social Council. Yet all of them should be tackled with a view to a coherent United Nations follow-up to the global conferences.

The responsibility for overall policy guidance and coordination belongs also to the Economic and Social Council as regards population and development issues. The Nordic countries have actively supported an enhanced role for the Council. The series of summits and conferences points to the need for a strong Council. The follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development, including reporting and intergovernmental mechanisms, should also support the Council. There is a need to see how the follow-up could relate to, and strengthen the concept of, the five pillars in the Agenda for Development and enhance the comprehensive approach to development advocated by the Secretary-General. As we see it, this entails a stronger United Nations responding to the challenges resulting from the conferences. We should avoid splitting the follow-up into numerous functional commissions and parallel reporting arrangements.

At the intergovernmental level, the United Nations now has several functional commissions, among them the Population Commission, that for the time being deal separately with narrow segments of economic and social development. What is needed, as the Secretary-General says in his recommendations on an Agenda for Development, is effective and realistic mechanisms to follow up the emerging new approach to development in a coherent manner. In addition, the needs arising from the forthcoming conferences and the discussion on the Agenda for Development should be duly taken into account. Participation of non-governmental organizations should be considered along the guidelines adopted in the International Conference on Population and Development process.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is at present the only organization within the United Nations system with a specific mandate in the field of population and development. However, in order to cover all aspects of the new, broad approach, other funds and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as the specialized agencies, must be mobilized too. These organizations need to take decisions in their governing bodies on their activities in the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development. Division of labour, efficient coordination and cooperation are imperative.

In the future, integrated operational activities for development, or at least their coordinated governance, might be a means for the United Nations to be really effective in development cooperation. Against this background, and in the context of the follow-up to the Conference, there does not seem to be, at the moment, justification for a separate executive board for UNFPA. Improving the present governance of UNFPA must in any case be considered in the context of the effective implementation of the reform of operational activities for development.

The follow-up of the Programme of Action requires strengthened multisectoral analytical capacity. The Programme contains many areas that at present are not covered by the mandate of the Population Division or by the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis. Cooperation needs to be strengthened within the United Nations, utilizing also outside expertise, as appropriate, and keeping in mind the emerging coherent view on development.

Together with improved institutional arrangements, we need a combined reporting and monitoring system for the follow-up of the various conferences, both at the national level and within the United Nations, covering the full range of sustainable human development. The present monitoring and reporting system on population issues, as it was defined 20 years ago, is outdated. We are now dealing with population issues in the context of sustainable development and as a part of the concepts of sustainable human development and human security.

The next session of the Economic and Social Council, which will deal with these issues, must be properly prepared by the Secretariat in consultation with Member States. Furthermore, with regard to coordination, we have noted with interest the work that is already under way in the Advisory Committee on Coordination and in the task force chaired by Ms. Sadik. This inter-agency coordination should be continued and will have to be adjusted to the requirements of the integrated approach that I have already referred to.

From the point of view of the United Nations, we need to ensure the effectiveness and predictability of the financing for population and development, and for development activities in general. We expect that the working group on the funding of United Nations operational activities for development, mandated by General Assembly resolution 48/162, will provide solutions for the future. It is most important to agree on a long-term, stable funding mechanism if we really want the United Nations to respond to the growing demand for grant funding.

The follow-up of the International Conference on Population and Development requires true commitment. Even the best possible United Nations mechanisms cannot work wonders without the commitment of our Governments and all concerned partners.

Mr. Wang Xuexian (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Cairo International Conference on Population and Development is a conference of great historical significance following the Conference on Environment and Development. The close linkage of the question of population with environment and development at the Conference has reflected a deeper understanding by the international community on the question of world population. The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development adopted by consensus at the Conference set the goal of world population growth in the next 20 years and the new strategy for its attainment, which will have an important impact on the orientation of activities and international cooperation in the field of world population and development.

Population is a major question facing mankind today. How it is addressed bears on the well-being of nearly 5.7 billion people in the world as well as the future survival of all mankind. Therefore, turning the Programme of Action from something on paper into reality is a grave challenge which calls for untiring efforts and political sincerity from all parties.

The Chinese delegation wishes to make the following observations on the implementation of the Programme:

First, the national conditions of each country must be fully respected in implementing the Programme.

The world we live in is diversified where countries differ in population, culture, history, tradition, level of economic development and religious background. It is, therefore, impossible to address the question of population of each country with a unified standard or model; nor can there be such a standard or model. The Programme must be carried out in the light of the population and national conditions of each country, and national population policy and objective should be formulated by each country independently according to the relevant provisions of the Programme.

Secondly, the settlement of the question of population must always be closely integrated with the promotion of all-round social and economic development.

The fundamental objective of addressing the question of population is to improve people's living standards and their quality of life. To achieve this objective, however, it is imperative to promote sustained economic development and gradually meet people's basic social needs. For the developing countries, the primary task is to eliminate poverty, improve education, health care and living conditions, enhance women's status and strengthen environmental protection.

Thirdly, the implementation of the Programme calls for not only the efforts of the Governments of all countries but also effective international cooperation.

The international community - the developed countries in particular - should create a favourable environment for the developing countries in their efforts for a comprehensive settlement of the question of population and development, and should especially fulfil their commitment made at the Conference by providing at least one third of the resources necessary for the implementation of the Programme and make sure that they are new and additional resources rather than those mobilized through the rearrangement of priority projects.

Moreover, no country should attach any conditions to its assistance in the field of population and development, for this is not only against the spirit of the Charter but also runs counter to the principle of equality and mutual benefit governing international cooperation. The United Nations donor agencies for development must adhere to the principles of universality and neutrality of their assistance without being disrupted, let alone manipulated by outside political pressure.

Fourthly, the implementation of the Programme requires effective follow-up actions.

It is necessary to conduct in-depth discussions about follow-up actions at the current session of the General Assembly and in the Economic and Social Council. The relevant agencies of the United Nations system should give top priority to the implementation of the Programme, and the United Nations agencies for operational activities, especially the United Nations Population Fund, should mobilize sufficient resources for its implementation. Moreover, other relevant international organizations and non-governmental organizations should also make their contributions to this end. The Population Commission should examine on a regular basis the implementation of the Programme, while countries provide on a voluntary basis information related to their implementation of the Programme. But the intervals for providing such information should not be too short so as to avoid any manpower or financial burden on the developing countries.

China has over one fifth of the world's population. As an active and responsible member of the international community, China attaches great importance to the materialization of the achievements made at the Cairo Conference. Out of a strong sense of responsibility for the present and future interests of the Chinese nation and for the purpose of world stability and prosperity, the Chinese Government will firmly implement its two basic State policies of family planning and environmental protection, while further deepening its reform and opening-up and achieving sustained and steady economic growth, with a view to satisfying the increasing material and cultural needs of the people, improving their quality of life and promoting all-round social progress. China's steady progress in coordinated development in respect of population and economic and environmental protection is undoubtedly a concrete and important contribution to the implementation of the Programme of Action of the Conference on Population and Development.

Mr. Hurst (Antigua and Barbuda): I am speaking today on behalf of the developing countries of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) - the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, and my own country, Antigua and Barbuda - and Suriname.

The CARICOM countries and Suriname would first like to express heartfelt condolences to the Governments and the peoples of Cuba, Haiti, Jamaica and the United States on the loss of life and destruction of property caused by the recent tropical storm. The Caribbean is prone to natural disasters, especially hurricanes and tropical storms. Today we appeal to the international community to come to the assistance of those island countries now in dire need.

Given the role played by our 13 Caribbean States, most recently in Cairo, we deem it necessary to pronounce ourselves on agenda item 158, "Report of the International Conference on Population and Development". This subject is of extreme importance to the entire international community.

We face a challenge, one that Member States agreed to confront by convening the International Conference on Population and Development. The challenge is to bequeath to the next generation a planet which will be able to sustain human life for ever. To do that, we must find a balance between current development needs that ensure an improvement in the living standards of present generations and the projected needs of future generations. It requires us to link population, resources, the environment and development in decision-making and planning. This objective requires of us a new model of development.

To prevent our planet from becoming overburdened and to ensure sustainable development, more than 15,000 participants and delegates from 179 States, the non-independent countries and a myriad of non-governmental organizations converged on Cairo, Egypt, this past September. In 1974 and 1984 two other international population conferences were held. More than three years in preparation, the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development drew on its predecessor conferences and other recent United Nations achievements, including the 1990 World Summit for Children, the 1992 Earth Summit, the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights, the 1994 Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the International Year of the World's Indigenous People and the International Year of the Family. The International Conference on Population and Development sought to articulate, and succeeded in demonstrating, the interconnectedness of the most challenging issues confronting humanity today. Poverty, inequality, consumption patterns, the status of women and threats to the environment were all addressed.

As developing countries, the member States of CARICOM and Suriname recognize that, should there be rapid population growth and unsustainable development,

we would suffer a collision of cataclysmic proportions. As low-lying island and coastal States, we face dangers created by others that imperil our very existence. Therefore, CARICOM and Suriname were intent on making a significant contribution to the outcome of the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo.

Prior to the Conference, each of our nations, including the non-independent countries of the Caribbean, produced a national report on population and development. The United Nations Population Fund provided both technical and financial assistance in the preparation of several of those reports. For that we are most thankful. The secretariat of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, and the CARICOM secretariat in Georgetown, Guyana, also provided technical assistance. Seven subregional and regional preparatory meetings were held within the two-year period preceding the International Conference on Population and Development, allowing Governments to agree on the Latin America and Caribbean Plan of Action and our subregion to put forward the Port of Spain Declaration on Population and Development.

During the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly our 13 countries voiced a desire for a programme of action that would be forward-looking, operational and pragmatic. We maintained that its recommendations should take into account regional diversity and country-specific conditions, such as those of our subregion. I am pleased to report that we are satisfied with the outcome. More than 16 chapters and 100 pages in length, the Programme of Action is the result of long and often difficult debate.

Several chapters of the Programme of Action, especially those on sexual and reproductive health and family planning, reaffirm the sovereignty of the individual over his or her own body; the State is not included where it is not necessary. The Programme of Action states that there is a

> "basic right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so". (*Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, A/CONF.171/13, annex, para. 7.3*)

Despite the lengthy debate and the necessary compromise during the preparatory process in Cairo, that statement was not eliminated. It has remained intact because it captures the essence of global aspirations in population policy-making.

The CARICOM countries and Suriname have learned that having the information and the means to fill the unmet need for family-planning services requires more than the provision of contraceptives. Our countries believe that the key to achieving the sustainable population-growth goals recommended in the Programme of Action rests with the participation of women in every aspect of development. That, in turn, begins with the education of the female child.

Government is therefore a key actor, but so, too, is the family. Our families are both traditional and innovative. Our societies find creative ways to provide support for single parents, particularly in female-headed households. We need to do even more to shield the children of these households from imported stereotypes which may convey to them a sense of lesser worth, thereby harming the innocents' self-esteem. The Programme of Action addresses this need.

Another significant challenge faced by our 13 low-lying coastal and small island developing States is the problem of out-migration. The emigration of the youngest, the brightest and, frequently, the ablest minds has resulted in a "brain drain". The high rate of emigration from our region has greatly affected the size and age structure of our populations. Many of our countries are faced with large populations of two of the most vulnerable age groups: children and senior citizens. This unusual distribution requires our Governments to pay particular attention to the provision of services to these two groups. Additionally, the prospect of having to support an increasingly older citizenry without the attendant contributions of a large pool of young people of working age places a great strain on the social-security schemes of the affected countries of the subregion. The Programme of Action addresses this anomaly.

We would have preferred to see the Programme of Action pay greater attention to the environment. However, having come away, in May, from Barbados, where the sustainable development of small island States was fully addressed, our countries were persuaded to allow the Cairo document to go forward. Nevertheless, we continue to insist that the industrialized countries must cease and desist from harmful production, wasteful

consumption and deadly disposal patterns that threaten our small countries with destruction. Twenty per cent of the Earth's population - the people living in developed countries - cannot continue to consume 80 per cent of the Earth's resources *ad infinitum*. Global warming and rising sea levels threaten our very existence. A new model of development is thus our ultimate objective, and implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development is one step in that direction.

We acknowledge that, as a consequence of poverty and our recent colonial past, several of our small countries have insufficient trained personnel to handle the task of implementing population programmes. In the light of this fact, CARICOM and Suriname are pleased to note the proposal by the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Mrs. Sadik proposes to establish an expert group, with participants from the World Health Organization, UNFPA, the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Development Programme, to move the concept of reproductive health from the discussion stage to the implementation stage with viable and sustainable programmes. We hope that this proposal will include the dispatch of additional advisers and resources to the Caribbean region from the UNFPA Country Support Team stationed in Santiago, Chile. CARICOM and Suriname are prepared to do all that is necessary to attain the population goals set out in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. We ask the international donor community to live up to its part of the bargain.

Our 13 small countries have a common history, with a modern history beginning in 1492, when two worlds collided. The *raison d'être* of the then dominant civilization was the accumulation of wealth. Capital accumulation led, in turn, to the industrial revolution. The technological marvels and tools that post-industrial civilization has invented lead us to think that humans can overcome every challenge through the application of intellect. This faith in humanity is not lost in addressing the need to create a new paradigm of development to eliminate the danger to our global village that the current model would surely cause. The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development pushes the intellectual frontier forward, and so we support it fully.

Mr. Maruyama (Japan): My delegation considers the Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development to be a truly significant achievement. Following the comprehensive approach taken at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro the year before last, the Cairo Programme of Action recognizes the close interrelationship of population, the empowerment of women, reproductive health and rights and sustainable development. It places the population issue in a broader context and gives it the priority status it merits. In the long term, the Programme of Action has the potential to substantially improve the quality of life for all humankind if we commit ourselves to its full implementation.

Therefore, important as the successful adoption of the Programme of Action is, my delegation would like to stress that further efforts by all parties concerned to effect its full implementation on a step-by-step basis are more important still. Every player at the international, regional, national and grass-roots level should be mobilized. Governments must live up to their commitments and implement the Programme of Action in the form of policy and legislation.

For its part, Japan will continue to contribute to the international cooperation efforts carried out under the Global Issues Initiative on Population and AIDS. Japan pledges to extend its cooperation to developing countries in this area - the total involved is approximately $3 billion - as part of its official development assistance programme for the seven-year period from the fiscal year 1994 to the fiscal year 2000.

Non-governmental organizations can help by providing support and services at the grass-roots level. And, of course, the people themselves, as beneficiaries of the Programme of Action, should be made aware of it and should endeavour to maintain the momentum that the International Conference on Population and Development has generated.

The United Nations and its specialized agencies have a wide range of roles to play in following up the Cairo Conference. The General Assembly, at this session, should adopt a resolution indicating both the general direction and the concrete steps that should be taken to study the mechanism for following up the Conference. Basically, my delegation does not favour the establishment of a new intergovernmental body, like the Committee on Sustainable Development, for this purpose as this would entail duplication of functions and increased expense. Rather, use should be made of the existing mechanism.

At the same time, the follow-up mechanism must be so constructed that it can address the population issue in conjunction with other relevant issues, such as sustainable development, reproductive health and rights, and the empowerment of women. We therefore need to consider strengthening the functions, as well as undertaking appropriate reorganization and coordination, of the relevant organs. I should add that this matter will require thorough and careful consideration by Member States.

Having laid out the basic elements of the follow-up mechanism, I should now like to touch upon some specifics. My delegation is of the view that the secretariat of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Population Division in the United Nations Secretariat should strengthen their cooperative relationship and play the central role, as in the case of the secretariat of the International Conference on Population and Development, while maintaining coordination with other relevant organs.

More specifically, in the light of its comprehensive coverage of population and other relevant issues, the Population Division should assume responsibility for overall coordination, while UNFPA should assume responsibility for the implementation of operational programmes. If these two bodies are to be entrusted with such tasks, however, their functions and capabilities need to be considerably reinforced.

Accordingly, my delegation would like to propose that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to submit a report on the roles of UNFPA and the Population Division, as well as on the reorganization measures and the resources that are needed. Since this is a complex issue, the report should be prepared on the basis of relevant expertise and should present multiple options. It should be submitted as soon as possible in 1995 so that it can be examined by Member States at the next session of the Population Commission, which is to be held in February, and at the summer session of the Economic and Social Council.

With regard to the mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the Programme of Action at the intergovernmental level, my delegation considers a substantially reinforced Population Commission to be the appropriate forum at the expert level. The Population Commission could be renamed the "Commission on Population and Development", and monitoring of the implementation of the Programme of Action could be added to its mandate. Concerning its meeting schedule, the present biennial four-day meeting is far from sufficient to enable it to take up the 16 chapters of the Programme of Action. My delegation proposes a substantial increase in the number of meetings of the new Commission. For example, it could meet annually for one week. At each meeting, a certain subject which covers several chapters of the Programme of Action should be addressed, such as population and sustainable development, population and health care, and population and human rights. While such an increase in the frequency of meetings may well result in increased expense, sufficient time must be devoted to the Programme of Action in light of its importance. In order to minimize additional expense, the current practice of providing air fare to representatives of Member States should be re-examined.

With regard to the size of the new Commission, from the standpoint of efficiency and in order to avoid duplicating the discussions of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, it is appropriate to maintain the present membership of 27 States. Experts from Member States who are knowledgeable about the specific subjects to be discussed should participate in the meetings. And representatives from other functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council that are relevant to the subjects taken up at each meeting, for example, the Statistical Commission, the Commission for Social Development, the Commission on the Status of Women, and the Commission on Sustainable Development, should be permitted to participate as observers.

The results of the monitoring of the implementation of the Programme of Action at the Commission on "Population and Development" Commission should be submitted to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which should address this item every year. The focus should be directed particularly towards impediments that may exist to the full implementation of the Programme of Action.

In order to maintain the present political momentum concerning the Programme of Action, the General Assembly and the Second Committee, as appropriate, should take up this issue as a separate item every year. In particular, in 1999, which is the halfway point between this year's International Conference on Population and Development and the following one in the year 2004, the General Assembly should undertake a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Programme of Action. We would like to request that the Secretary-General report on the mechanism for such a review in due course.

Before concluding, my delegation would like to touch briefly upon the question of a separate executive board for UNFPA. It is our view that it is premature to create such a separate executive board at this stage. While the necessity of reinforcing the functions of the UNFPA is recognized in view of the implementation of the Programme of Action, the concrete advantages of having such a separate executive board must justify the consequent increase in expense. My delegation is not convinced that there is a genuine need to establish a separate executive board for the UNFPA. In order to strengthen the function of the UNFPA, the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board should allocate more time to the operational activities of the UNFPA.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.